**IT Applications**

**Onscreen design elements, p 233**

**Onscreen solutions need to be carefully designed to create user-friendly onscreen productions.**

**From pg 234 complete the following in relation to the design elements to consider.**

1. **Proportion**
   1. **What is meant by the hierarchy of a page?**

The term hierarchy refers to a system in which things are ranked above other objects. In reference to a page hierarchy, this means that objects such as the heading and subheadings are quite large and prominent whilst the normal text is smaller and non-bolded, meaning that the user’s attention is drawn to the headings and sub-headings.

* 1. **What factors affect the visual hierarchy of a screen**

The size of the fonts and/or graphics. The positioning of objects, the formatting of fonts and the use of animation.

1. **Orientation**
   1. **What does orientation refer to?**

How the elements are positioned and formatted on a screen.

* 1. **List some typical considerations for orientation of screen elements.**
* - What direction a logo is to face.
* - Whether a frame on a website should be at the top, bottom, right or left.
* - How text should be aligned.
* -size of the page onscreen.
* -Help files will not be viewed as a full screen, but rather as a floating box.

1. **Clarity and consistency**
   1. **What does clarity refer to?**

How clearly the information on the screen is presented, and how well the user can distinguish between visual elements.

* 1. **List characteristics of a clear screen.**
* Uncrowded with irrelevant information
* Font styles and size
* Resolution in graphics such as photos or videos.
  1. **What is meant by consistency?**

Similar repeated features on the screen. This is important so that the user can navigate without error or confusion.

* 1. **List elements that can be used to support the consistency of an onscreen document.**

Company logos, headers and footers, font styles and sizes, numbering styles, search fields and navigation icons.

1. **Colour and contrast**
   1. **What are the conventions for onscreen colours?**

* Black on a white background are the most easiest to read
* Red and green should not be used together as this is unreadable for colour blind people.
* Limit the variety of colours on the screen.
* Light or pastel shades are the best choice of back ground
* Avoid using bright or vivid colours except if that area is to be emphasized.
* Blue is the standard colour for an unvisited hyperlink, changing to purple when visited. If different colours are used they should be consistent.
  1. **What is the role of whitespace in assisting the contrast in an onscreen product?**

Whitespace provides a good contrast with black writing. If the font is consistent and there are no unnecessary images then it is much easier to read the text. Whitespace also draws the users attention to the text or relevant information rather than distracting them.

**Characteristics of onscreen solutions: efficient and effective user interfaces, p 238**

1. **What is the user interface?**

The point at which the user interacts with an information system. Hardware elements include a keyboard, mouse or touch screen. Software elements include the operating system and the application software.

**In addition to the design elements already considered high quality user interfaces need to consider the following:**

1. **Usability and accessibility**
   1. **What is meant by usability?**

The ability of the user interface to not distract the user and to be transparent, i.e. the user doesn’t notice the user interface itself and instead can focus on the information they sought.

* 1. **List some factors that contribute to increased usability.**

The user interface should be unobtrusive and clear. It should not have any unnecessary or to many decorative elements. Users should also have the option of turning off any onscreen help buttons.

* 1. **Which fonts are used for headings and body of document?**

Serif fonts, which are easy to read, should be used as the body text. Sans serif font, which has no tail, should be used for headings. Serif fonts guide the eye and cause less strain when reading.

* 1. **What is meant by accessibility?**

The ability of the user interface to allow the user to find the relevant information immediately and interact with it straight away.

* 1. **List examples of conventional navigation symbols.**

A question mark for a help symbol, house for ‘home’ and backwards and forwards arrows to go to previous of next pages. The designer should always use conventional navigation symbols as an unusual one will cause annoyance by the part of the user as they will not be able to interact with the solution properly.

* 1. **What other factors must interface designers consider?**

Interface designers must know their target audience, and thus design the solution so that it has the widest possible range of users.

* 1. **What are built in redundancies in an onscreen product?**

An alternative that allows the user more than one way to perform the same action. E.g. there may be a drop-down list, keyboard shortcut or an icon to click on. These all provide more accessibility to the user.

1. **Appropriateness and relevance.**
   1. **What characteristics must an onscreen product have to meet the needs of its audience?**

The onscreen solution must have appropriate and relevant information. Irrelevant information is distracting and should be avoided at all cost.

* 1. **List items to avoid.**

Jargon, irrelevant graphics, colours, change in fonts, i.e. anything that distracts from the original and intended goal of the solution.

**Characteristics of onscreen solutions: Characteristics of effective information architecture.**

1. **What does information architecture refer to?**

The way that the information is structured and the way that it can be navigated by the user.